

MEN

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655 Madison Avenue
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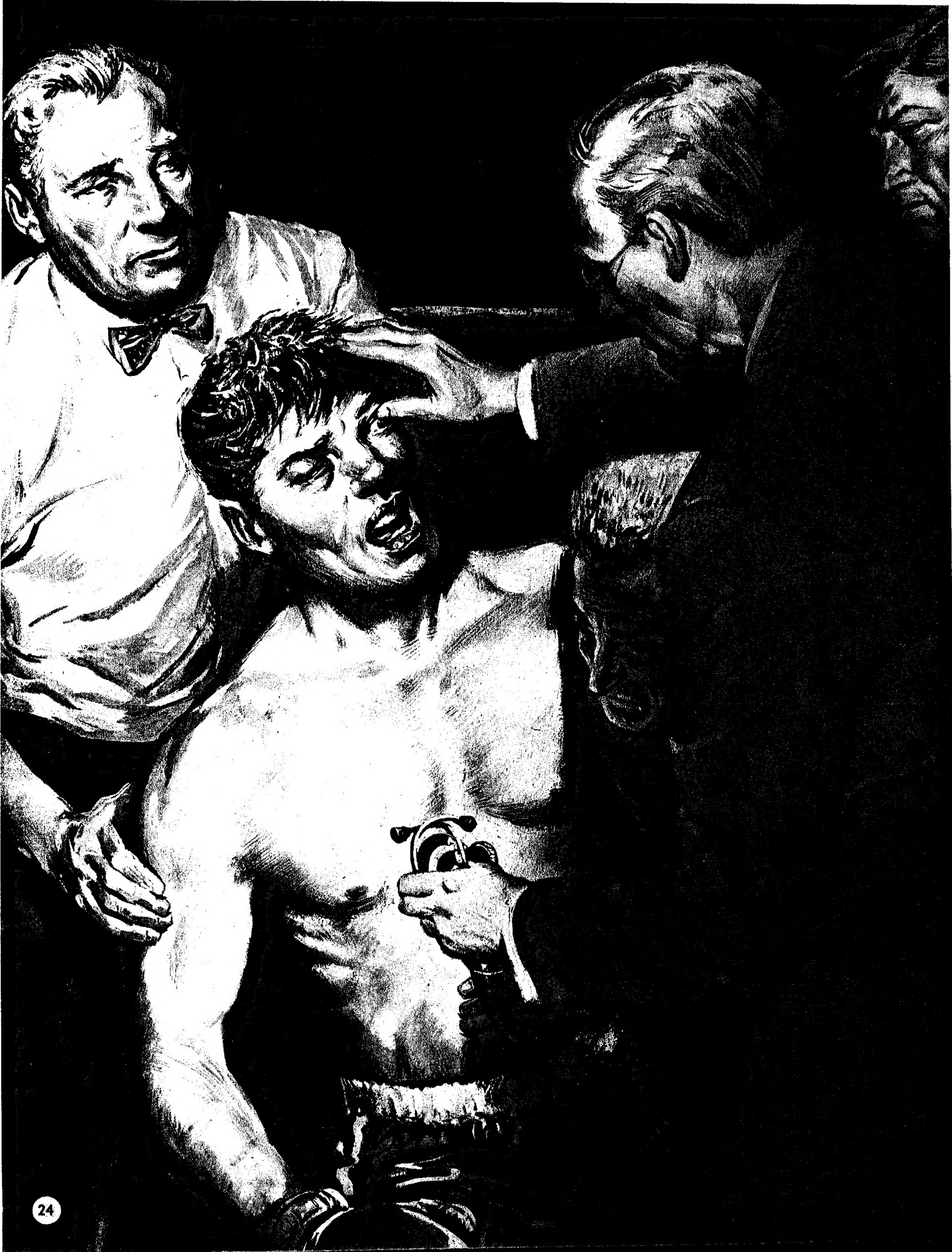
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WILLIAM R. STEWART
9 South Clinton St.,
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West Coast

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6399 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles 48, Cal.

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TAKE HIM IN C

By JACK RICHIE

He was the best light-heavy in the business, a cinch for the title. And everybody—even his manager—prayed he'd get his head knocked off.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAL SINGER



I figured I'd been carrying the bum long enough. The big paying customers at ringside now had their money's worth.

In the clinch I looked up at the clock. Only a few seconds to go, so I'd have to wait until the next round. On the break, I threw a stiff left that buckled Burke's knees. The fans groaned and set up a clamor of boos. I strolled back to my corner, grinning, as the bell ended the third round.

Mike Watt, my manager, shoved the stool under me. He shook his head. "Why did you have to hit on the break," he said sadly. "You know you don't need to do that to win."

The referee came over to my corner. "I'm taking that round away from you. If you try it again it'll cost you that round, too."

"Take it easy, boss," I said with a broad grin. "Just limber up that forefinger. You'll need it for counting in the next round."

The ref stared at me and then walked away.


Mike handed me the bottle and I took a swig. "Take a look around," he said. "They hate your guts."

I rinsed my mouth and used the bucket. "What's the difference if they love me or hate me. As long as they pay their money. Nice house," I said, glancing around. "Nearly full."

The 10-second buzzer sounded. Mike handed me my mouthpiece and then he and the seconds got out of the ring.

Burke came out slow, his arms too low, waiting to throw the long right that might end it. I let him have a light left to his nose and danced away. He punched a big hole in the air in front of me. I laughed at him.

His face got red as he swarmed in, (Continued on page 74)



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Take Him In 6

Continued from page 25

throwing hard but slow punches. I took them all on my shoulders and elbows, but they looked good to the customers in the gallery. They set up a roar, hoping that I was in serious trouble. I let Burke have his fun a little longer, and then I went down on my heels and whipped over a straight right that went home. He hung suspended for a moment, then he dropped to the canvas.

I ambled over to a neutral corner. While the ref counted Burke out, I put my glove in front of my face and yawned.

When the ref announced the time of the knockout—32 seconds of the fourth round—the fans rumbled with disappointment. There was no applause when I marched down the aisle.

In the dressing room Mike was silent as he cut the tape off my hands.

"Be happy, Mike," I said, smiling. "Be happy you got Teddie James, the best light-heavy in the business. Don't worry about my personality."

He tossed the wrappings in the wastebasket. "There's more to this game than fighting," he said. "There's even a little room for sportsmanship."

"For the amateurs, yeah," I said. "I'm in it for the money."

The reporters came into the room dragging their feet. Their lemon expressions told me they didn't care for me either. I shrugged my shoulders. It didn't mean a thing to me.

Henley, a wise little guy from the *Post*, started the questions without enthusiasm. "Did Burke ever have you in trouble?"

"Naw," I said. "He's strictly a club fighter, if that good. He ought to get into some other racket."

"Burke took quite a beating in the second," Baldwin, from the *Graphic*, said. "You got to admit he has plenty of courage."

"All right," I said, laying down on the rubbing table. "I admit it. He's got to have something. He can't fight." I closed my eyes and listened to the quiet.

Finally Henley said, "I hear you got a chance at the title."

I opened my eyes and looked at Mike. He nodded his head. "We sign the papers next week. I was going to tell you later and tickle your big heart."

I closed my eyes again. "I suppose we get the short end of the gate."

"Does it ever happen any other way for the challenger?" he said.

Joe, the trainer, was rubbing my shoulders near the neck. I sighed contentedly. "I'll take that old man in three rounds." I lay my cheek against the cool table. "No. I guess I'll make it the sixth. My tribute to Jim Farrell, the grand old man of boxing."

I heard Henley strike a match for his cigarette. "Farrell's lost only one bout out of 87."

"This'll make it two out of 88. He can't get around without a cane any more."

"At 36 he's still the champ and the best man around for my money," Baldwin said with emphasis.

"What comes after the title," Henley asked dryly. "You maybe thinking of the moon?"

I stretched and sat up. "I'll turn heavy. Better competition and more money."

The scribblers shuffled out of the room, and I showered and got dressed to go out. "I'm going out for a couple of drinks," I said to Mike. "I think I deserve them."

"Drink as much as you like," Mike said.

I PUT on my hat at the door. "I thought you might want to throw a celebration for me."

Mike was working his way into his top coat. "Is it in the contract?"

I adjusted my hat brim. "You break my heart, Mike. You don't like my company, but you like the dough I bring you."

Mike's cheekbones got red. "What you need is a good licking. Something that'll take the dollar sign out of your head."

I opened the door and laughed. "Who is there in this world to give it to me?"

The bar across the street was filled with the after fight crowd, but I found a small table in the rear and ordered a Manhattan. I sipped it and sat there humming and trying to estimate the gate for tonight's fight. Nobody cared to join me.

At the bar I could see Henley and Baldwin having a drink with a tall ash-blond who had a smile beautiful to watch. After a while Henley pointed in my direction.

She regarded me soberly and with a peculiar expression on her face. Then she smiled again and came walking over. "Do you mind if I sit down?" she said. "The very idea of being in the same room with the greatest fighter in the world has me dizzy."

I pulled out a chair for her. "My extreme modesty prevents me from telling you just how good I really am."

She accepted the drink I ordered. "Henley's been telling me a few things about you, but I thought they couldn't possibly be true."

I wondered what he had been saying, but I knew it wasn't good. "They're probably true," I said.

Her eyes were gray-blue. "It doesn't bother you?"

"Not a bit," I said.

She played with her glass. "To you everyone's a bum?"

"There's only one solid thing in this world," I said; "that's money. I despise anything and anyone else." I ordered another drink.

"I see," she said. "You were born on the wrong side of the tracks."

I downed the drink. What's the matter with me, I thought, all this gabbing. But I went on. "Not just on the wrong side of the tracks—under them. I never had a dime until I rolled a drunk when I was 12. The dough made me a big man in my neighborhood for a while. I like being a big man, and money makes me one."

Henley came over with a drink in his hand. "I thought I saw him paying for your drink with his own money, Claire," he said. "I had to come closer to make sure."

"Why don't you go away and write a column?" I said.

Henley sat down. "Maybe you can get him drunk and find out what makes him tick. If it's worth it. Has he got to the sad story of how his old man beat him every day of the week?"

I signaled the waiter for another Manhattan. "He was a religious man," I said. "He beat me twice on Sunday." I glared at Henley. "He's the only man who ever liked me and he's the last."

"Don't blame me," Henley said.

The waiter came over with his tray of drinks. He stumbled over somebody's legs and the tray fell on the table, spilling the liquor on my suit. It was a \$150 suit and I saw red. I jumped up and grabbed him by the shirt front. "You clumsy oaf," I snarled. I drew back my fist to let him have it and the pandemonium began.

Either the waiter had a lot of friends or I had a lot of enemies. They swarmed from bar stools and tables to get a crack at me.

A few of them wished they hadn't got the idea, but all together they were too much for me. I went down from the pressure of a dozen bodies, and a knee under my jaw was the last thing I remembered.

The patrol wagon was almost at the station before I woke up. I didn't feel very good, and from the feel of my face I didn't think I looked too good either.

The impassive desk sergeant took my name. "Teddie James," he said, looking at me. "Well, who do you want to call? Your lawyer or your manager? Or is it possible you got some friends?"

I hesitated. "My lawyer," I said.

He was down in half an hour to bail me out.

Mike came into my room early next morning. He tossed two newspapers on my bed. "Now it's drunken brawls," he said, wearily. "I hear there's talk of suspending you for a couple of months."

"Can't be nothing but talk," I said, picking up the *Graphic*. "This has nothing to do with the ring."

THE story was on the front page middle. "Teddie James In Barroom Brawl," it said. "Refuses To Pay Bar Bill. Assaults Waiter." Paragraph three interested me. "Swaying slightly, Teddie James, promising young light heavyweight, reportedly told police, 'I refuse to pay good money for bad whiskey.'"

I folded the paper. "I don't imagine it would be any good to sue them. They say 'reportedly.'"

The *Post* had it more interesting, I thought. "Light Heavy Challenger in Tavern Riot. Insults Sister of Champ And Is Slapped."

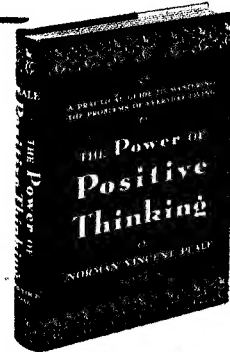
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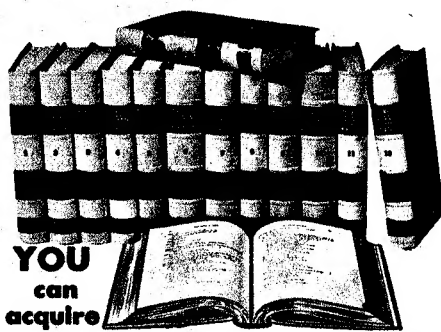
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I frowned. "Clarice Farrell, sister of Jim Farrell, present light heavyweight champion, last night struck the first blow in her brother's defense of the title."

I stopped reading and threw away the paper. "I'll bet Henley wrote that," I said. "I think he's the one who kneed me."

Mike picked up the papers while I got out of bed and went to the mirror. "So that was Farrell's sister," I said. This morning the black eye looked worse. I had a split lip and plenty of bumps and cuts.

After showering and dressing, I went downstairs to the hotel restaurant. Henley was there, big as life, eating breakfast with Clarice Farrell. I went right over.

"Did you write that story?" I said evenly.

Henley was nervous. "What do you care what I write? It'll make the fight a sell-out."

"For a little man, you got a big mouth," I said.

His eyes were looking for help. "You lay a finger on me," he said, "and I'll sue!" His voice got higher. "It'll cost you money."

Clarice said, "Please, let's not go around again."

I put my knuckles on the table. "Henley, if you bet somebody you're brave enough to come to my hotel and eat breakfast here after what happened last night, you're going to earn your money the hard way. I'm counting you to 10, and when I'm through, if your face is still in front of me, I'm going to show you how it feels to get a knee in the teeth."

He sputtered. "This is a public place." I began counting. "One, two, three..." When I got to seven he was up and hurrying away.

Clarice sipped her coffee. "I suppose you couldn't resist that."

"I didn't think I should kiss him," I said and sat down. "I'd like to apologize for last night. I take a drink once every six months and even that's too much."

"Perhaps if you drank oftener, it would make you human."

The waitress brought over the menu. "I'm as human as anyone. Sometimes more so." I glanced at her. "You didn't come in to rile me, did you?"

"No," she said. "I wanted to apologize for Henley and what he wrote. And to tell you that I explained everything to my brother."

I grinned. "Afraid he might want to beat me up?"

She didn't smile. "He could, you know. He's the best."

The next week I loafed around during the days, recovering from the beating I took in the bar. The evenings I spent taking Clarice to the best night clubs and theaters.

When the time came to sign the contract for the championship fight, I showed up at the Commissioner's office.

Jim Farrell and I sparred off for the benefit of the news photographers. He had light blue eyes and a good-natured grin. "I hear you intend to hit this old man."

I looked coldly at him. "Too bad we couldn't have met when you were at your best. But now you'll have a good excuse when they carry you away."

His smile got thin. "You may be good," he said. "But you're not that good."

I turned my back on his offer to shake hands.

Five weeks before the fight I went into serious training. I took the boredom of the training camp for three weeks and then I phoned Clarice and asked if she wouldn't come up.

She drove her car into the lot the next day.

"Smell that air," I said, as we walked around the lake. "It's healthy, it's invigorating, and it's dull."

She was rather silent and preoccupied. At last she said, "I wish you two weren't fighting."

"Divided loyalties? I like that." I tossed a pebble into the lake. "Who's corner are you going to be in?"

She was thoughtful. "My brother's, I think." She watched the boats on the water. "Actually, I've never seen my brother in the ring and I don't want to."

"I could go easy with him," I said.

She stopped and looked at me.

"All right," I said. "I'll pretend I didn't say that."

We walked out on a dock. "Are you going to stay in the ring until it's too late?" she asked.

"Not me," I said. "When I start getting more than I give, I'll hang up the gloves. I should have a million by then."

"No," she said seriously. "A million won't be enough. You'll want two million by then."

In the evening she went back to the city.

THE last week of training I started getting jittery. It wasn't because of the fight, but I couldn't put my finger on what was bothering me.

I went to the little village movie late one afternoon after the day's work. I went alone because everybody seemed to have something else to do. After the first part of the double feature I got restless and left the theater. Outside I stopped at the newsstand to buy a paper from the kid operating it. He was about 15 years old and leaned on crutches. He took my nickel and handed me the paper. Then he looked closer.

"Are you the Teddie James who's training outside of town?" he asked.

"Sure," I said, smiling and expecting to sign an autograph.

His face was expressionless. He handed back the nickel. "Take the paper," he said. "I hope Farrell flattens you."

I put the paper back on the stand and walked away.

When I got back to camp it was after midnight. I stumbled up the steps of the lodge to find Mike waiting for me.

"I see you've been drinking," he said it as though it didn't make much difference.

"Sure," I said. "I been drinking and drinking and I brought more with me." I sat heavily on a chair and held the bottle on my lap. "You want a drink or don't you drink with me?"

He sat down in an easy chair and lighted a cigar. Except for the two of us the place was empty and silent; everyone had gone to bed.

I tilted the bottle for a couple of swal-

lows. "Why don't you take the bottle away from me?" I said thickly. "Liquor's bad for a fighter."

He stared at his cigar smoke.

"Where's Joe?" I said loudly. "I need a rubdown. Hey, Joe! Where are you?" I yelled.

"Joe's working," Mike said.

"Working!" I demanded. "Working at midnight! Get me Joe!"

"When he's through here he puts in eight hours at the cannery in town," Mike said.

I swigged from the bottle. "Money hungry," I said. "Isn't 75 a week enough for him?"

Mike took the cigar out of his mouth. "He needs twice that. He's got a kid in the hospital and his wife needs a lot of doctors."

I blinked at him. "Want a drink?" I asked.

Mike shook his head negatively.

"The hell with you," I said, putting the bottle to my mouth. I made my way to a davenport and lay down. "Money hungry," I mumbled as I closed my eyes.

The next day was wasted, but we got in three more days of training before we packed up and left for town.

At the weigh-in I tipped the scales at 181 even, and Farrell was a shade over 184

Henley had his nose in the proceedings. "I heard you had a wild party at your training camp," he said, leering.

I buttoned my shirt collar. "Complete with dancing girls," I said.

"The odds are 3 to 2 in your favor," he said, sneering. "Do you think the booze will slow you up?"

"No, I don't think the booze will slow me up," I said, mimicking his prissy voice.

He colored. "As far as I'm concerned you're just another stumblebum," he snapped.

I let him have the back of my hand across his face and he sat down hard. "Sue me," I said, and walked out.

The coliseum was a sell-out to the rafters. Mike told me that when he came into the dressing room before the main go. Lying on the table, having Joe work on my muscles to loosen them, I could hear the 30,000 fans roaring at a prelim knockdown.

"Joe," I said. "You're getting 75 a week, aren't you?"

"Yeah," he said, kneading the flesh up around my neck.

"It's 150 now," I said.

His hands stopped. "What for?" he asked suspiciously.

"Because I like your beautiful face," I snarled. I opened my eyes. Mike had the cigar out of his mouth, eyes watching me.

"Joe's my friend now," I said.

"I don't need the money," Joe said.

I closed my eyes. "Take the damn money," I said wearily. "You don't have to like me."

After the prelims I took the walk down the aisle to the ring. I had to wade through a solid river of boos to get there. But that was nothing to what I got when the ref announced my name, weight and home base.

Farrell and I came to the center of the ring for the instructions we knew by heart. We shook hands.

What Strange Powers Did The Ancients Possess?

EVERY important discovery relating to mind power, sound thinking and cause and effect, as applied to self-advancement, was known centuries ago, before the masses could read and write.

Much has been written about the wise men of old. A popular fallacy has it that their secrets of personal power and successful living were lost to the world. Knowledge of nature's laws, accumulated through the ages, is never lost. At times the great truths possessed by the sages were hidden from unscrupulous men in high places, but never destroyed.

Why Were Their Secrets Closely Guarded?

Only recently, as time is measured; not more than twenty generations ago, less than 1/100th of 1% of the earth's people were thought capable of receiving basic knowledge about the laws of life, for it is an elementary truism that knowledge is power and that power cannot be entrusted to the ignorant and the unworthy.

Wisdom is not readily attainable by the general public; nor recognized when right within reach. The average person absorbs a multitude of details about things, but goes through life without ever knowing where and how to acquire mastery of the fundamentals of the inner mind—that mysterious silent something which "whispers" to you from within.

Fundamental Laws of Nature

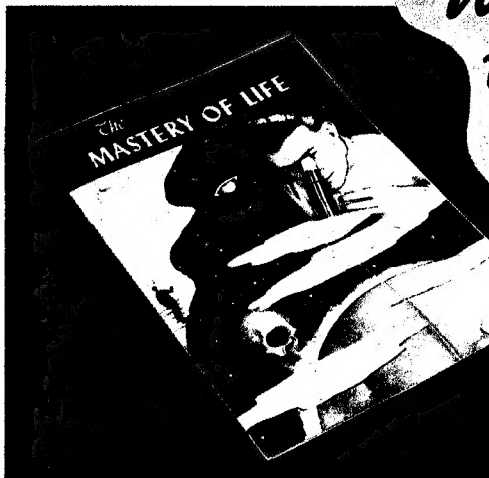
Your habits, accomplishments and weaknesses are the effects of causes. Your thoughts and actions are governed by fundamental laws. Example: The law of compensation is as fundamental

as the laws of breathing, eating and sleeping. All fixed laws of nature are as fascinating to study as they are vital to understand for success in life.

You can learn to find and follow every basic law of life. You can begin at any time to discover a whole new world of interesting truths. You can start at once to awaken your inner powers of self-understanding and self-advancement. You can learn from one of the world's oldest institutions, first known in America in 1694. Enjoying the high regard of hundreds of leaders, thinkers and teachers, the organization is known as the Rosicrucian Order. Its complete name is the "Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis," abbreviated by the initials "AMORC." The teachings of the Order are not sold, for it is not a commercial organization, nor is it a religious sect. It is a non-profit fraternity, a brotherhood in the true sense.

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Sincere men and women, in search of the truth—those who wish to fit in with the ways of the world—are invited to write for a complimentary copy of the booklet, "The Mastery of Life." It tells how to contact the librarian of the archives of AMORC for this rare knowledge. This booklet is not intended for general distribution; nor is it sent without request. It is therefore suggested that you write for your copy to the Scribe whose address is given in the coupon. The initial step is for you to take.



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"I wish you luck," I said, grinning. "But not too much of it."

A grin split his face. "The sixth round you said, didn't you?"

We came out cautiously at the bell, spending the first two minutes testing each other for obvious faults.

He slipped a singing hook over my right guard. I covered my retreat with a pumping left. He came after me and slammed a right to my cheek. It staggered me because I was off balance. The crowd came to its feet for what they hoped was the beginning of the end. But Farrell knew better. He played it careful, neatly slipping the right I had waiting for him. We exchanged long lefts, and at the bell he was concentrating on my body.

In the corner, Joe wiped my face. "I didn't notice anything wrong with his style," he said. "If I see anything, I'll let you know."

At the bell Farrell came out in a crouch and I had trouble reaching him. He got in a right hand to my stomach that made me step back for a breath of air. Seeing his advantage, he came out of his shell, boring in. I took his punches on my elbows and clinched as soon as I could.

WE were separated. Farrell was a crowd-winning fighter and he swarmed all over me. Suddenly he slipped and his arms dropped to his sides as he tried to keep from falling.

I was close enough to take advantage of that and had my arm cocked. Instead I stepped back until he regained his balance. The crowd rumbled in a perplexed fashion.

We traded body punches and fell into a clinch. Farrell had his head buried on my shoulder. "Is this the dirty fighter they've been telling me about?" he mumbled.

I pushed him away. "I'm getting chicken-hearted. I hate to hit an old man when he's not ready."

The round was pretty even, I figured, when the bell sounded. But the officials would probably give it to him, and the first, too.

Mike had his mouth close to my ear. "You feeling all right?" he said. "I thought you'd never pass up a chance like that to nail him."

In the third I began to get to him. I noticed that a nerve on his cheek twitched whenever he was getting ready to throw his left.

I brought over a right hook that caught him as he was about to throw it. He winced and gave ground. I followed carefully, but ready. The nerve twitched again, and I uncorked another right. I caught him flush and he dropped to one knee.

In a neutral corner I waited while the referee counted. Farrell was up at four, but he took the compulsory count of eight.

Farrell came on, apparently unhurt. But he covered up well, and when he had the opportunity, he hugged me in a clinch. We separated at the referee's direction.

My jab was short, and he stepped in with a looping left that had plenty of steam behind it. I felt a trickle of blood from my lips as I backed off. He went down to the body, digging in good punches

until I tied him up. Just before the bell I rocked him with a right cross.

When I sat down, Joe began treating the cut lip. "A muscle on the side of his cheek twitches whenever he's going to throw a hook."

"I all ready got it," I said. "But thanks."

The first minute of the fourth round I kept bothering him with left jabs. They added up and his right eye was beginning to close. He tried keeping his right high, but a little body punching brought it down. I put a lot of shoulder into a left hook. His eyes clouded and he went down on his side.

He shook his head, trying to clear the cobwebs, and managed to be up at the count of eight. The ringside fans began shouting the advice that he should stay in close.

I landed three booming lefts and he staggered. I set him up for the finishing right. It was too high, but he went down on his back.

I don't see how he made it, but he beat the count of nine. For a minute the referee looked like he was going to stop the slaughter, but then evidently he decided that a champion shouldn't lose on his feet.

Farrell lurched flat-footed around the ring. I came in, put everything I had into a straight right. Farrell had his head down and my punch caught him high on the head.

A lightning flash of pain darted through my hand and up my arm. I backed away trying to see through the pinwheels of light flickering before my eyes.

At the bell, Farrell's seconds rushed out and brought their man to his corner.

Mike was waiting for me in my corner. "What's the matter with your hand?"

"Nothing," I said. "He's just got a hard head."

He took my right arm and began manipulating it. I could feel the blood draining from my face.

"Let that damn hand alone," I said.

"Hell," he said. "The fans in the dollar seats know you broke something."

He tried to linger after the 10-second buzzer, but I told him to get the hell out.

Farrell came out looking much better than he had a right to be. His punches still had sting in them. The muscle in his face twitched and he swung his left. I caught it on my right forearm, and for a second I thought I'd drop as the pain danced up to my shoulder.

I tried to keep away from him, but he kept bulling in and unlimbering those lefts. There wasn't much I could do to stop them. I took a half-dozen punches without making a return. My face was becoming numb and blood was flowing from a cut near my eye.

He came in close and staggered me with a jarring right.

I dropped to one knee and the referee began counting. By the count of eight the buzzing in my head had stopped and I was on my feet.

Getting desperate, I tried long looping lefts, hoping I might catch him. But he ducked under them and worked on my midsection. When I tried to clinch, he put his weight behind a short right uppercut.

I went down heavily on my right arm.

Every cell in my body throbbed with white-hot pain. I fought my way to my feet before the ref got to 10. My eyes were swollen and I could barely make Farrell out. He cracked over another hook that sent me sprawling. I was on my knees at the count of seven and beat the count.

The bell ended the round and my seconds dragged me to my corner.

"I'll throw in the towel," Joe said.

My lips were numb. "You're back to 75 if you do."

The commission doctor came over to my corner and examined me.

"Ask me anything," I said. "I can even tell you who was vice-president in 1832."

He smiled slightly beneath his frown. "You'd better call it quits," he said.

"No," I said, looking at him as steady as I could. "I don't finish any of my fights sitting in a corner."

The buzzer sounded. The doctor stared down at my useless right arm. "All right," he said. "Your eyes are clear, but I think you're crazy."

I came out for the sixth feeling giddy with pain and tiredness. As Farrell came close I put my body behind a wild left.

He evaded it easily and then there was a bright flash and darkness as his counter winged home to my chin.

I woke up in my corner with the boys working on me. The ring was crowded with cops and reporters. The doctor was back, looking worried.

"I'm bright and brainy as ever," I mumbled.

"It's not your head I'm worried about," he said. "Let's get you back to that dressing room and take off that glove."

The walk back to the dressing room started quiet enough. But when I was a few feet down the aisle, the fans began to stand up and applaud. The roar got louder and louder as I neared the dressing room. And when Mike finally shut the door behind me, it was on one long, rocking torrent of noise.

On the table I closed my eyes while they took off the tape.

"Did you hear what Farrell told the newsboys and radio audience?" Mike said.

"I wasn't around," I muttered.

"Farrell's retiring with this bout. He says you're a cinch to be the next champ."

I sighed.

"He admires your guts, what with that busted wing and all."

"That makes two of us," I said, feeling sleepy.

The doc stuck a needle in my arm and I winced. "We'll have to take him to the hospital to get this fixed," he said.

"Doc," Mike said eagerly. "After the arm is put together, do you think he'll be able to leave right away? We got a celebration planned for the coming champ."

THE doctor was dubious. "I think you'd better call it off."

"We can't," Joe said. "We just thought of it now."

"I'll be there," I said. "After I get an hour's sleep."

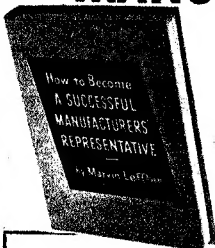
"Maybe we could get Farrell to show up for a while," Joe said.

"Tell him to bring his sister," I whispered, just before I fell asleep. ●

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